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ACP

FARMER

COST - SHARING

# A CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP

how to  
use the...

ACP  
agricultural  
conservation  
program

PA-454 (R)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service

# A CONSERVATION

# PARTNERSHIP



## *how to use the Agricultural Conservation Program*

The Agricultural Conservation Program (ACP) is a partnership between farmers and the general public. Through it, the public shares with farmers the cost of conserving our soil, water and woodlands.

These resources are vital to each of us and are essential to the health and welfare of coming generations. The Nation recognizes that we must protect and conserve now the resources we will need in the future. Yet farm and ranch resources can be conserved only by the farmers and ranchers who use them. Through ACP, the Government on behalf of all the people joins with farmers and ranchers to insure that the needed conservation measures will be carried out both adequately and in time. The results benefit the entire Nation.

The ACP is Administered nationally by the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Locally, it is run by your Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation (ASC) County Committee. This committee is composed of three local farmers and usually the County Extension Agent, who is either a member or secretary to the committee.

### **Who Decides What Your County ACP Will Be?**

Program decisions are made by the ASC County Committee and local technicians of the Soil Conservation Service and Forest Service (usually State Forester), together with representatives of other agricultural agencies and organizations. These include the ASC Community Committeemen, Farmers Home Administration, governing bodies of local Soil Conservation Districts, Vocational Agriculture teachers, representative farm organizations, and others.

### **How Are ACP Practices Selected?**

Practices are selected to promote soil and water conservation measures-to meet local conditions. If a practice benefits people nationally, as well as locally, and would not be used to the extent necessary

without cost-sharing, it can be selected for ACP. On the other hand, a practice that farmers or ranchers are using, to the needed extent, would not be included in ACP.

Generally, a practice must be needed on several farms before it is offered in the county program. However, if you need assistance in carrying out a practice not included in the county ACP, talk it over with your ASC County Committee. Provision is made to include practices of a special or local nature in your county program.

A new and very desirable practice may be offered to introduce it into the county. In this way, ACP helps farming by encouraging the use of new and good conservation practices.

### **How Is the Program Run?**

ACP funds are necessarily limited and may not meet all the need or demand for conservation. Cost-sharing funds must be used to help farmers or ranchers meet their most critical conservation problems. The decisions as to the best use of available funds are made by your ASC County Committee. This committee has been elected by you and your neighbors to make fair and just decisions. Requests for cost-sharing are now considered from the standpoint of merit; not on a so-much-per farm basis.

### **Conservation, Not Production**

ACP is designed to help farmers establish a system of conservation land use and management. While good conservation practices will restore and maintain soil productivity, ACP is not intended to increase crop production.

This fact explains many of the limitations placed on the use of ACP cost-sharing.

*To illustrate:*

**Not eligible:** Dams intended primarily to store water for fishponds, recreation, or farmstead water supply.

**Eligible:** Dams to control water runoff, protect permanent vegetative cover, or promote better



grassland management through proper distribution of grazing.

**Not eligible:** Irrigation structures intended to bring new land into production.

**Eligible:** Irrigation practices that save and make more effective use of water or reduce soil erosion on land now in agricultural production.

**Not eligible:** Limestone and fertilizer materials for increasing crop production.

**Eligible:** Lime and fertilizer materials used to establish or improve vegetative cover for soil protection.

**Not eligible:** Drainage, irrigation or land-clearing practices that increase crop-producing acreage.

## Are There Limitations?

There is no limit on the number of needed conservation practices for which you may receive approval under ACP in a program year, except as your County Committee might restrict approvals to insure maximum conservation with available ACP funds.

However, you will not be allowed more assistance than the maximum cost-share payment limitation provided by law or established by your ASC State or County Committee.

Also, if the County Committee decides there are more urgent conservation problems than yours that require the available ACP funds, the practice you request may not be approved for cost-sharing at that time.

## ACP Separate From Other Programs

Taking part in ACP has no effect upon your eligibility to participate in other agricultural programs. Neither do you have to participate in any other programs to be eligible for ACP.

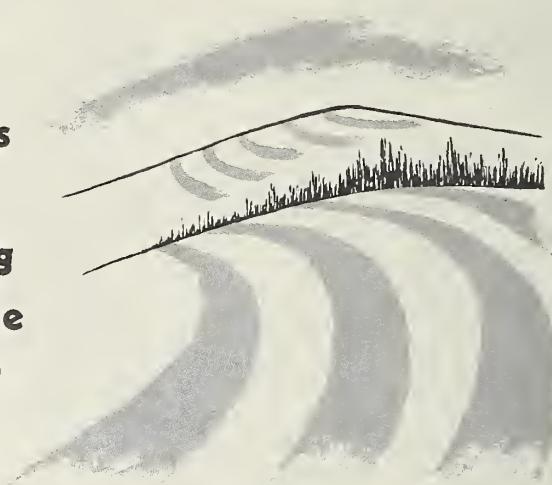
However, you may receive cost-share assistance only once for performing a practice even though it could qualify for cost-share assistance under more than one program. This applies to the Conservation Reserve Program, Great Plains Conservation Program, and Naval Stores Conservation Program.

## ACP Helps in Other Programs

ACP can help you install eligible practices needed to carry out your Soil Conservation District conservation plan. You may get cost-share assistance on required land treatment measures in Flood Prevention projects, Small Watersheds, and Rural Development programs. ACP can be used to help you with conservation treatment of land diverted

from crop production through the acreage allotment and marketing quota programs. ACP can also help you carry out practices essential to other locally sponsored programs.

## Steps in Using The ACP



## Who Takes Your Request?

Sign-up methods can vary. For example:

- You may file at your ASCS County Office.
- You may attend a community sign-up meeting.
- Community committeemen may visit you.

Your request for ACP cost-sharing is taken on a printed form (ACP-201) which must be signed and filed before work begins on the practice.

## What Happens to Your Request?

When your request is approved by the ASC County Committee, you will be notified on Form ACP-245 of the extent and amount of cost-sharing approved.

If your request is not approved for cost-sharing, your County Committee will notify you of the disapproval and the reason for it.

## How Do You Get Cost-Sharing?

There are two methods of receiving cost-sharing in the ACP.

1. **"Cash" plan used in all counties.**—You pay the total cost of establishing the approved practice and later you are reimbursed for the Government's share of the cost.

## **2. "Purchase order" plan used in many counties.—**

You may receive the Government's share of the cost through the purchase order plan. The Government's cost-share is advanced to you, not as cash, but through the purchase for you of a conservation material, such as seed, trees, fertilizer, lime and tile, or a service, such as earth moving, tree planting, tile laying, etc.

At the time you file your request for cost-sharing, you should indicate if you desire to use the purchase order method to obtain the material or service you will need to install the practice.

After the material or service has been furnished you for the approved practice, the vendor who furnished it will bill the Government and receive payment of the Government's share of the cost. You must pay the vendor the difference between the amount the Government pays the vendor and the total cost of the material or service used.

## **Technical Services Furnished**

In addition to sharing the cost of conservation, ACP also helps provide the required technical service you need to receive maximum value for your conservation dollar. Such technical service, if needed, is made available by special arrangement with the Soil Conservation Service, U. S. Forest Service, State Forester, County Extension Agent, and others.

When your request for cost-sharing on a practice that requires technical aid is approved, a notice of tentative approval (Form ACP-247) is issued to you and the agency concerned. The technical agency makes "need and practicability" determinations before final approval is issued. The responsibility for providing you needed technical service on such a practice rests with the agency concerned. However, a call or visit from you will help the technician make necessary arrangements for prompt service.

Tentative approval notice (Form ACP-247) does not constitute definite approval. To be assured of cost-sharing, do not start the practice until you get your definite approval notice (Form ACP-245) from the ASC County Office.

## **Follow Specifications!**

Practice specifications give the minimum requirements which research and experience indicate are necessary for success of the practice. They are also the minimum standards under which the public is willing to share the cost. Specifications must be met for you to receive cost-share assistance.

When you use a practice such as terracing or tree planting where technical assistance is supplied by the Soil Conservation Service or State Forester, a

technician will inspect the practice and certify whether it has been completed according to specifications.

## **Report Completion!**

Before you can receive the cost-share payment for performing a practice, you must certify that the practice is completed. You do this by completing and returning approval Form ACP-245 to your ASCS County Office.

If you are unable to complete the practice before the expiration date specified on the form, you may request an extension of time from your County Office to complete the practice. Extensions usually can be granted.

## **Is There a Penalty for Not Completing?**

If you receive approval for a practice and then find you are unable to carry it out, no penalty will be imposed. However, no cost-share will be paid by the Government for a practice you do not perform.

If you have received materials or services (CMS) for a practice you are unable to complete, arrange with the County Office for settlement of the charge or for approval of a substitute conservation use for it.



## **Moving Ahead Through ACP**

By their very nature, most conservation measures are geared to the future. Your conservation efforts today will protect your land for future use.

ACP is a service provided by the Government to assist you in using conservation practices that will help you and the Nation. To be of greatest value, conservation practices must be well planned.

When you have set a conservation goal, ACP can help bring it within your reach. Without a goal, ACP assistance may contribute little to the overall, long-time good of your land.

You can get help in planning your work from the conservation technician assisting your Soil Conservation District, your county or State Forester, Extension Service, Vo-Ag teacher, ASC County Office, and others.

Don't ask for the practice easiest to do—use the practice best for your land.



## Your ACP Check-Off List

### (1) DETERMINE YOUR NEED

Determine your needs on the basis of your long-range conservation program. Specifically, decide what is necessary to overcome your problems.

### (2) SELECT A PRACTICE

Study the county ACP and select the practice that will help you meet your needs.

### (3) FILE YOUR REQUEST

Contact the ASCS County Office. File a request (Form ACP-201) for a particular practice. Specify the extent of your need. Your request must be filed before work begins on your practice.

### (4) FURNISH INFORMATION TO TECHNICAL AGENCIES

If the practice you select requires technical assistance, get in touch with the soil conservation or forestry technician.

### (5) CARRY OUT THE PRACTICE

Complete the practice before the expiration date shown on approval Form ACP-245.

### (6) REPORT PERFORMANCE

Report completion on or before the expiration date (Form ACP-245).

### Ask Your ASCS County Office for Details

Your ASCS County Office will be glad to furnish you information about your county ACP, including eligible practices, rates of cost-sharing, and specifications for each practice. Take along any written farm conservation plan you have and visit the County Office.

Issued April 1961  
Slightly Revised August 1961